* Peasants freed from legal bonds to lords only in 1861—feudalism banished late
* Late in industrializing
* Until 1905 no legal political parties, no central elected parliament, autocracy with undiminished powers
* Legally citizens still belonged to estates (urban, peasant, clergy and noble), no account of new social groups like professionals and factory workers
* First spurt of economic growth fin de siècle—government industrial policies, foreign investment, modernization of banking and credit structure, development of native entrepreneurial activity
* Still 80% peasants
* Vast expanse of territory, largely rural except St. Petersburg (capital), Moscow, kiev, Kharkov, Odessa, new mining and metallurgy centers of donbass (Ukraine), warsaw, lodz, riga, Rostov and Baku oil city
* Peasants still farmed land in narrow strips, land held in communal tenure—mirs would periodically redistribute strips so each house equal share—wooden ploughs, no modern farming techniques, subsistence level farming
* Before emancipation, worked strips of village land and worked masters’ land/paid equivalent of labor in money, after emancipation, still worked own land and sometimes for hire on old master’s lands, paying redemption for 49 years (cancelled a few years early), mir responsible for collective debt, so peasants bound by debt and mir’s collective responsibility to stay in village
* Emancipation meant to prevent mass influx of peasants into towns, but also reinforced mir and old system of communal land tenure, so impossible for peasants to consolidate strips, expand or improve holdings, or become independent small farmers
* But peasants could do seasonal work outside village, before WW1, 9 million peasants seasonal workers—almost half of which would work outside agriculture
* Young men came in contact with modern world when called for army
* Young more literate than old
* Number of permanent industrial workers=3 million (1914), but only in Petersburg were wholly without ties to village
* Large scale growth of industry and towns only after 1890 (50 years after w. Europe)
* Modern industrial sector small, but unusually concentrated geographically and in size of plants
* Backwardness had advantage of skipping early stages by aid of large-scale foreign investment, energetic state involvement and borrowing advanced technology
* Putilov works in Petersburg and mostly foreign-owned metallurgy plants in donbass employed many 1000s
* According to marx, highly concentrated industrial proletariat under conditions of advanced capitalist production likely to be revolutionary, but pre-modern working class with strong ties to peasants is not (contradictory in Russia)
* Working class very militant and revolutionary—large scale strikes frequent, workers showed solidarity against management and state authority, demands both political and economic
* 1905 revolution saw workers of Petersburg and moscow organize own revolutionary institutions (soviets)
* Summer of 1914, strike in Petersburg made it seem like mobilizing for war was too risky
* Purely economic protest against employers very hard (“Trade unionism”)—gov had large stake in industry and in protection of foreign investment, so quick to provide troops to put down strikes—so even economic strikes turned political
* Resentment against foreign managers and technical personnel
* Peasants weren’t source of stability—land-hunger and migration to towns made them anarchic
* Modern characteristics still very incomplete—business and commercial class comparatively weak, but professions, associations and emerging civil society visible
* Increasing professionalization of state bureaucracy, but upper ranks dominated by nobility
* Service prerogatives imp to nobility due to economic decline as landowners—only some made transition to capitalist market-oriented agriculture
* Educated Russians—intelligentsia—westernized educated elite, critical semi-oppositionist attitude to regime
* Lawyers whose education led them to believe in law likely to disapprove of arbitrary administrative practices, untrammelled police power and gov attempts to influence judicial system
* Zemstvos (elected local gov bodies separate from state bureaucracy) employed around 70,000 professionals (early 1900s) with radical sympathies
* Finance minister Witte tried to rally support for autocracy and modernization drive among technical specialists and businessmen; energetic sponsorship of industry, but his enthusiasm was not shared by Russian bureaucratic elite and nick II
* students of polytechnical institute came in contact with radical politics

Revolutionary thought

* intelligentsia used western Europe as yardstick
* one view was capitalist industrialization produced human degradation, impoverishment of masses, destruction of social fabric in west—to be avoided in Russia—‘populists’
* Populism mainstream radical thought 1860-80
* Generally accepted socialism (utopian socialism, not Marxist) as most desirable form of social org, but not incompatible with liberalism of political change
* Some tried to create ties with “the people” (narod)—idealization of Russian peasantry, wished to save mir from capitalism, as mir an egalitarian institution through which socialism may be found
* 1873-4 populists flocked to villages, to enlighten peasantry and conduct propaganda—no central direction and no clearly defined political agenda, but authorities alarmed, mass arrests
* Peasants suspicious, rejected populists as outsiders, movement failed
* Changed into terror tactics—1881 People’s Will assassinated Alex II, but effect was not to destroy autocracy, but frighten it to repressive policies and creation of police state
* Popular response to assassination was anti-semitic pogroms, peasants thought nobles had murdered tsar emancipator because he freed serfs
* Marxists immerged 1880s, repudiated utopian idealism, terrorist tactics and peasant orientation, argued capital industrialization inevitable, peasant mir already in state of internal disintegration, propped only by state and state-imposed tax collection/redemption payment responsibilities; asserted capitalism only path to socialism, industrial proletariat only class capable of bringing about true rev
* Marxists claimed premises scientifically proven by objective laws of historical development
* Early Marxists clustered around Plekhanov in emigration, passive, intellectual debates
* Rapid industrialization seemed proof that Marxists were right
* Capitalism was a progressive phenomenon to Marxists in late 1800s, in favour of capitalism as necessary for socialism
* Marxists supported urban workers over peasants, differed from social revolutionaries and liberals (latter wanted bourgeois revolution, new professional class and liberal zemstov nobility supported them)
* Marxists educated workers in basic literacy as well as ideology
* 1898 illegal organization of Russian Social Democratic Labor Party
* Small group under struve left party as identified strongly with objectives of the first (liberal) revolution on Marxist agenda (which would be followed by socialist revolution), modernization-minded—‘legal’ marxists
* 1903 2nd congress of RSDLP, dispute led to split into Bolsheviks (lenin) and Mensheviks (Trotsky, Plekhanov, martov, larger and diverse group)
* Lenin considered large loosely knit political organizations to be less effective than smaller disciplined radical groups demanding high degree of commitment and ideological unity
* Mensheviks emerged as more orthodox marxists, less inclined to force pace of events towards revolution, more success in attracting support in nonrussian areas, Bolsheviks in Russian workers (both parties dominated by jews)
* 1910-1914 mensheviks lost support as mood became more militant, Bolsheviks seen as more revolutionary
* Bolsheviks had single leader, identity largely defined by lenin’s ideas and personality—party vanguard and creator of proletarian revolution as proletariat could not achieve class consciousness for revolution
* Lenin believed core of membership should be full-time professional revolutionaries, centralization, strict discipline, ideological unity—partly necessary for any clandestine party, but some say it shows natural authoritarian tendency
* Lenin revised orthodox Marxism to get a way round doctrine of bourgeois revolutionary leadership—with proletariat and peasants, he thought he could force socialist revolution early

1905

* Tsarist Russia expanding imperial power, largest standing army of all European great powers, often thought external affairs could be set against internal problems—‘small victorious war’ to solve domestic unrest
* But war had traditionally created unrest—crimean led to 1860s reforms, Balkan defeat in 1870s led to political crisis ending with Alex II’s assassination
* Early 1900s, Russia expanded to far east
* Conflict with expansionist Japan
* Thought easy pickings to be made in far east, japan as non-european necessarily inferior
* Initiated by japan but provoked equally by Russian policy, russo-japanese war jan 1904
* Port Arthur surrendered Dec. 1904, economic problems—disrupted transport system, shortages and high prices
* Mukden battle—90,000 soldiers died
* Baltic fleet defeated in battle of tsushima
* Hated minister Plehve assassinated, Polish nationalists celebrated russia’s humiliation, representatives of the zemstva (nov. 1904) privately asked mirsky, plehve’s more liberal replacement, for national assembly, nick II reluctantly only expanded zemstvo rights
* Series of disasters and humiliations on land and at sea, early patriotic enthusiasm soured, attempts by public organizations like zemstvos to help in emergency only led to conflict with bureaucracy and frustration—liberal movement fuelled
* Zemstvo nobles and professionals rallied behind illegal Liberation movement directed from Europe by struve and other liberal activists
* Liberals organized banquet campaign, social elite supported constitutional reform
* At the same time, terrorist attacks on officials, student demonstrations, workers’ strikes
* 3rd jan 1905, putilov works on strike, 150,000 workers joined in
* Jan 1905 Petersburg workers held peaceful demonstration organized by Father Gapon (renegade priest with police connections) to bring economic grievances to Tsar’s attention, went to winter palace unarmed, singing hymns and carrying icons of tsar
* Bloody Sunday—troops fired on demonstrators outside winter palace, 100s dead and wounded
* Grand duke sergei assassinated
* Zemstva representatives met in Moscow, trade unions developed in all major industries
* May 1905 union of unions set up from liberal professional unions, demanded democratic reform
* Peasants met in Moscow for all Russian union of peasants
* June and july, union of unions prepared for general strike, Potemkin battleship mutinied in black sea
* Right wing death squads—“black hundreds” went around killing jews and socialists
* Spirit of national solidarity strong during first 9 months
* Liberals claimed leadership, support based on zemstvos and new unions of middleclass professionals
* Student demonstrations, workers’ strikes, peasant disorders, mutinies in armed forces, unrest in non-european parts of empire
* Witte managed to negotiate Treaty of Portsmouth on advantageous terms late august 1905
* But 1 million troops still in Manchuria, couldn’t come home on trans-siberian until railwaymen stopped striking
* October 1905 workers of Petersburg formed soviet of workers’ representatives elected in factories to provide city with a kind of municipal gov when other institutions paralysed and general strike in progress, but also political forum (Trotsky one of the leaders), soviets spread to other cities like moscow
* October manifesto 1905: principle of constitution and national elected parliament, duma, conceded
* Manifesto divided liberals—octobrists accepted it, constitutional democrats (cadets) hoped for more concessions, but liberals as a whole withdrew from revolution, organized new parties and prepared for elections
* Workers remained active till end of year, increasingly militant
* Early December, dispersed by successful police operation—news of attack on Petersburg soviet led to armed uprising by Moscow soviet, where Bolsheviks had gained influence, put down by troops but many casualties
* Peasant rioting (sacking and burning of manor houses and attacks on landowners and officials) began in summer 1905, peaked in late autumn, resumed in 1906
* But late 1905 gov strong enough to use troops in village by village pacification
* By mid 1906, all troops back from far east, discipline restored
* 1906-7 winter, much of rural Russia under martial law, summary justice (over 1000 executions) dispensed by field courts martial
* Landowning nobility learnt that its interests lay with tsar—shield against vengeful peasantry, not with liberals
* But no clear divide in urban Russia—liberals were not capitalists, they were professionals, they had not opposed workers’ socialist movements unlike European counterparts—liberals a timorous ally, not treacherous ally
* Political outcomes: fundamental laws of 1906 (constitution) said russia still autocracy, autocrat now consulted with elected parliament and political parties legalized, but duma had limited powers, ministers in cabinet solely responsible to tsar, and first 2 dumas—too insubordinate—arbitrarily dissolved, new electoral system adopted which narrowed franchise and overrepresented landed nobility
* Political reforms of 1905-7 only provided public forum for political debate and training ground for politicians
* Police regime still intact—due process of law still suspended for much of the population much of the time, but understandable—1908 (quiet year), 1800 officials killed and 2083 wounded in politically motivated attacks
* Trade unions had been made legal in principle, but individual unions still frequently closed down by police
* Political parties legal, and even revolutionary socialist parties could contest in elections, but members were as liable to be arrested as in past, party leaders forced back into emigration to avoid imprisonment and exile
* Peasant revolts of 1905-7 persuaded government to abandon earlier idea of mir as guarantee of rural stability
* Stolypin, new chief minister, wanted class of small independent sober and strong farmers
* Peasants encouraged to consolidate holdings and separate from mir, land commissions established to facilitate process
* Assumption was that poor would sell up and go to town while more prosperous would improve and expand holdings and acquire conservative mentality
* 1915, 25-50% of russia’s peasant farmers held land in some form of individual tenure, but legal and practical complexity of process meant only 10% completed process and enclosed land
* Stolypin reforms laid basis for capitalist development in agriculture
* But if reforms worked, revolutionaries felt proletariat would lose important ally

Duma and politics:

* Upper chamber of state council elected by zemstvas and Tsar, Duma would be lower chamber
* All laws had to pass both houses and gain tsar’s approval
* Government responsible to tsar only
* Tsar retained power to rule by decree, dissolve duma, head of military, foreign affairs, church, court expensive and government appointments
* First duma—SRs and Bolsheviks refused to participate, mainly kadets and trudoviks (moderate SRs), many peasant delegates—wanted to strengthen authority by right to appoint ministers, amnesty to political prisoners, direct male suffrage, seizure of land—tsar affronted
* 2 billion gold francs loan gave financial power, duma dissolved, witte fired 1906
* Summer 1906 200 delegates met in finland and appealed to public to refuse military service and taxation—vyborg appeal—met with apathy, kadets discredited, signatories disenfranchised and imprisoned
* Second duma—stolypin tried to consolidate octobrists position, but bulk of seats went to left parties (decided to participate)—SRs, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, few supporters of constitutional system—down with the duma!
* Stolypin couldn’t get support for agricultural reforms, accused SRs of assassination plans, had deputies arrested (illegal—deputies supposed to have diplomatic immunity)
* Both social democrat parties members arrested/exiled, duma dissolved
* Emergency law to change electoral system—nobility and gentry overrepresented, conservative duma—many laws passed, but disputes arose over local government reform, extension of education (everything which threatened nobility) by 1911, octobrists opponents of tsar, duma suspended twice to allow emergency legislation to pass through, lasted full 5 year term
* Stolypin assassinated 1911 allegedly by court conspirators
* Fourth duma close facsimile of third, but moderate octobrists lost support, very rightist conservative and (blindly) supportive of conservative regime
* Following Lena Goldfields massacre of 1912, 9000 strikes to 1914, involving over 3 million workers, Bolsheviks took over trade unions in Petersburg, Moscow
* Court increasingly criticized—in anti-german atmosphere, tsarina’s german background hated, many courtiers had german background, tsar cousin of german Kaiser, influence of Rasputin showed moral corruption

PRE-1914 Russia:

* Ethnic Russians less than half of population, rest Ukrainians, jews, Armenians, poles, Tartars, Byelorussians
* Pobedonostsev’s influence as repressive reactionary made lasting impression on Nick II
* Statute of state security (est. 1881-1917)
  + Special courts under gov control, outside of judiciary framework to deal with revolutionaries
  + Removal of judicial officers with liberal/radical sympathies
  + Censorship of press
  + Okhrana had great power
* University Charter (1884) and University Statute (1887)—unis under gov control, ministry of education approved chancellors, deans, professors—religious, patriotic and moral achievement emphasized, tuition fees raised so lower classes couldn’t attend, student gatherings forbidden
* Russification policies: orthodox church converted those of other faiths, Russian the language of administration, Finnish local autonomy and language taken away, Armenian church property confiscated, language suppressed
* Pogroms condoned by authorities—1881-1905 215 reported pogroms, 1905 odessa 500 jews killed by black hundreds
* Jews and other nationalities responded to russification with great hostility, emigrated, joined revolutionary parties and generally opposed tsarist regime
* Witte’s economic reforms: increasing indirect taxation, securing loans, reducing imports, expanding exports (esp grain), (tariff act of 1891 protected Russian iron, machinery and cotton—under witte’s predecessor)
* Foreign expertise encouraged to work in Russia, currency reform—new gold-backed rouble, stable currency, encouraged investment
* 2 billion roubles of foreign investment by 1914, mainly French but also Britain, Germany and Belgium
* Mining, metallurgy, oil industry and banking benefitted
* 62,000 km of railway by 1914—used to open up mineral deposits in interior, easy access to ports for grain exports, stimulated iron and coal industries, transport costs for goods went down, Trans-Siberian railway significant symbol, second largest rail network in the world
* Emphasis on heavy industry, drive to concentrate industrial capacity by larger factories to improve productivity—by 1908, 2.6 million workers in only 40,000 factories
* Russia only significant rival to US in oil production
* Significant increases in industrial output, but bulk of exports still only grain, fell short of witte’s expectations—critics say he should have focused on agriculture to create stronger internal market
* Stolypin: redemption payments ended 1907, autumn 1906 increased amount of state land peasants could buy, granted equal rights to peasants in local administration
* Land commission and Land Bank encouraged peasant ownership of land, further encouragement to migrate to Siberia (reduce pressure on land due to overpopulation)
* Partially successful—hereditary ownership of land increased to over 50% by 1914, 3.5 million migrated to Siberia where dairy farming encouraged, but process slow—only 1.5 out of 5 million applications processed
* Use of modern machinery and chemical fertilizers slightly more common, but only 10% land consolidated, many peasants made poorer—relied on rented land or abandoned agriculture and left for cities, 50% land still under noble control
* Relative neglect of lighter industry
* Industrial depression of 1900-8 led to strain on authorities
* Witte unable to balance the budgets—restricted profits
* Internal market needed to sustain economic growth failed to materialize
* Stolypin killed 1911, so reforms left unfinished—only 1% peasants achieved kulak status
* Infant mortality rates higher than most parts of Europe, life expectancy around 28
* Urbanization took place—6 million factory workers, 28 million urban residents, but cities not prepared for this influx—40% of Petersburg houses had no sanitation or running water, 300,000 died from cholera 1908-9

1914 WAR

* Socialist movement split between defensists supporting war effort only as long as territory in danger and defeatists (lenin)—defeat would lead to civil war, revolution and world communism
* Russian army suffered crushing defeats (5 million 1914-1917), german army penetrated western territories, chaotic flow of refugees into central Russia
* Scandal around tsarina and Rasputin, Nicholas assumed responsibility as commander-in-chief—away from home, personal responsibility for defeats—monarchy derided—alexandra and Rasputin had disastrous influence over ministerial appointments, Rasputin assassinated by young nobles to save honour of Russian autocracy
* Defeats turned public sharply against government—legitimacy shaky—incompetence and backwardness denounced
* Radicalized mass politics—peasant soldiers educated in trenches by urban politically aware soldiers

1917 FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

* Bread shortages, strikes, lockouts and finally demonstration in honour of international women’s day by female workers
* Workers flocked to the street
* Fourth duma petitioned emperor for responsible cabinet and to stay in session for duration of crisis—both requests refused, but unauthorized duma committee dominated by cadets and the Progressive bloc remained in session
* Tsar’s ministers abandoned capital, Tsar failed to understand seriousness of situation, police disintegrating, troops from Petrograd garrison brought into city to control crowd began fraternizing with it
* Petrograd’s military commander reported revolutionary crowd had taken over all railway stations, all artillery supplies, very few reliable troops remained and even his telephones not working
* Nick’s train met by emissaries from army high command and duma, told nick to abdicate, Grand duke Michael declined invitation to succeed brother—tsarist regime ended de facto
* Country’s future form of gov to be determined by constituent assembly, meantime provisional gov would take over, headed by Prince Lvov (head of zemstvo league and moderate liberal)
* Provisional gov had no electoral mandate—authority from defunct duma, army high command and informal agreements with zemstvo league and war industries committee
* Only 2 officers of entire army refused to swear allegiance to provisional gov
* 2 self-constituted authorities had sprung up—other was Petrograd soviet, dual power relationship emerged spontaneously, accepted because gov had no choice
* Provisional gov had no real power from the start as directives only carried out if Petrograd soviet and soldiers’ deputies permitted, all troops, railroads, post and telegraph in soviet hands
* Prov gov mainly liberals, soviets dominated by SRs and Mensheviks (latter was headed after revolution over by intellectuals who warily supported bourgeois gov as necessary stage in road to communism, also because any failure could be blamed on prov gov, and not ready to take control yet)
* Order no. 1—democratization of army by creation of elected soldiers’ committees, reduction of officers’ disciplinary powers, recognition of soviet’s authority on all policy questions—no gov order to army valid without soviet counter-signature
* Didn’t actually call for elections to confirm officers in their positions, but such elections were being held by more unruly units—100s of naval officers arrested/killed by Kronstadt and Baltic fleet sailors during feb days
* Prov gov remained firmly committed to war effort, foreign minister’s note in april implied continued interest in extending control over Constantinople and the Straits before public outcry and street demonstrations forced him to resign
* Soviet executive committee took defensist position, opposed annexation war aims but supported war as long as Russian territory under attack
* But in actuality, grassroots level soldiers, streets, factories attitude was get troops back
* May 1917 gov became coalition of liberals and socialists, with Mensheviks and SRs, but soviet remained forte of socialist action—socialist ministers of agri and labor couldn’t implement policies because of liberal opposition
* But in public eye, Mensheviks and SRs discredited by associating with bourgeois gov
* At time of feb rev, most leading Bolsheviks in emigration or exile, those in Siberia were first able to return (stalin and Molotov), but those in emigration found it hard to get back, had to take german offer to return in sealed train
* Before lenin’s return, Bolshevik organization regrouped and published newspaper, signs of drifting into loose coalition around soviet, mild defensist position, critical support of gov
* Lenin returned April 1917—april theses belligerent, uncompromising and hostile to prov gov, socialist unity and war
* All power to the soviets! Peace, Land, and Bread!
* Lenin decided time for capitalist overthrow was here—war showed capitalist death was near in all of Europe
* Bolsheviks isolated selves from socialist coalition, minority in june congress of soviets, yet to win a major city election
* But growing strength at grassroots level—workers’ factory, soldiers and sailor committees, local district soviets in big towns, party membership increasing spectacularly, 100,000 by end of april (350,000 by October)
* To soldiers, feb revolution was implicit promise of end of war
* But in 1917, new democratic structure of elected committees, old problems of inadequate supplies and restless and uncertain mood—ineffective fighting force, morale not totally disintegrated at front, but in garrisons around the country with reserve troops very unhappy
* Class antagonism between men and officers made inroads in army’s solidarity
* Revolutionary workers with Bolshevik sympathies had returned to factories
* Lower level urban district soviets were more radical
* New trade unions established, at plant level workers set up factory committees to deal with management—most radical of workers’ organizations—bolsheviks had dominant position
* Bolsheviks nominally in favour of ‘workers’ control’ without defining what they meant by it
* Landowners and industrialists fled, plants closed down, estates abandoned
* Peasants took opportunity to seize lands—asked for egalitarian redistribution of lands held by state, nobility and church
* Despite seriousness of land problem and unauthorized land seizures, prov gov procrastinated because radical land reform would pose serious problems—complicated official mechanism of expropriation and transfer beyond its capacity, couldn’t afford to pay compensation to landowners—shelved problems for constituent assembly to deal with
* Mid-june, Kerensky, minister of war, encouraged summer offensive on Galician front—first serious military undertaking since rev, failed miserably, 200,000 casualties
* Germans began successful counter-attack, Russian soldiers (especially peasants who heard about land seizures) deserted en masse, prov gov’s credit undermined, tension between gov and military leaders increased
* July saw governmental crisis—withdrawal of cadet ministers and resignation of Prince Lvov
* Petrograd erupted into mass demonstrations, street violence, July Days disorder—as many as 500,000 people, including large contingents of kronstadt sailors, soldiers, workers from Petrograd plants, kronstadt sailors set off disorder—had Bolsheviks among leaders, with Bolshevik slogan, but Lenin’s greeting was subdued and curt—didn’t encourage violent action against prov gov or soviet leadership—confused and lacking leadership and lacking specific plans, movement disintegrated
* July days indicated strong popular sentiment against prov gov and dual power, impatience with coalition socialists and eagerness for insurrection
* But july days disaster for Bolsheviks—had talked about insurrection but not planned it, kronstadt sailors’ initiative had effectively been disowned by the Bolsheviks, and damaged Bolshevik morale and lenin’s credibility as revolutionary leader
* Damage all the greater because Bolsheviks were blamed for july days, gov cracked down on Bolsheviks and Trotsky (had taken position close to extreme left and was to become official Bolshevik in august), orders issued for lenin and Zinoviev, rumors spread about lenin being german agent—bolsheviks battered by patriotic denunciations, lenin fled to finland
* Dual power increasingly shaky, socialists moving further to left by soviet force, liberals moving to right under pressure from industrialists, landowners, military commanders
* German activity on northwestern fronts heightening tension in armed forces, military high command discussed military coup with support from some industrialists and some cadets, Kerensky had appointed General kornilov as commander in chief with mandate to restore order and discipline in Russian army, implicit reference to Bolsheviks—misunderstandings happened, germans’ captured riga, kornilov dispatched troops to Petrograd ostensibly to quell disorders in capital—attempted right wing coup, supposedly
* Failed, troops unreliable, railwaymen diverted and obstructed troop-trains, printers stopped publication of newspapers supporting kornilov’s move, metalworkers rushed out to meet troops and explained Petrograd calm and officers had deceived them, coup aborted outside Petrograd, kornilov arrested
* Kerensky’s standing further damaged by handling of kornilov affair, government weakened, soviet committee also emerged with little credit as resistance to kornilov had been organized at local union and factory level—this contributed to upsurge of Bolshevik support
* Army high command hit hardest of all, relations between officers and men deteriorated sharply, morale very low, kornilov’s successor abruptly resigned mid-september, german troops still advancing
* Convinced many workers that only armed vigilance could save revolution from enemies—creation of workers’ militia units “red guards”
* Bolsheviks gained majority in Petrograd and Moscow soviet early September
* Lenin urged Bolshevik party to plan for revolution, but stayed in hiding, Bolsheviks more inclined to use position in soviet to achieve quasi-legal non-violent transfer of power.
* Trotsky was leader of Bolshevik majority in Petrograd soviet, didn’t voice doubts but Zinoviev and Kamenev thought it irresponsible to consider coup and unrealistic to think power could be held alone—published arguments under own names in a non-bolshevik newspaper, lenin furious—effectively a public announcement of Bolshevik plans
* Advance publicity, however, actually helped cause—bolsheviks would have to act now, Kerensky didn’t take any decisive countermeasures, Bolshevik control of Petrograd soviet’s military revolutionary committee made it easy to organize coup
* Kerensky couldn’t interfere with MRC as it was meant to protect against right wing coup, german troops advancing, Petrograd threatened—if Kerensky forced workers to disarm, he would have been lynched as traitor
* Insurrection began 24th October on eve of meeting of second congress of soviets, MRC began occupying key government institutions, took over telegraph offices, railway stations, set up roadblocks on bridges and surrounding winter palace where prov gov in session
* No violent resistance—lenin came out of hiding, next day coup was accomplished, but unclear who victors were

OCTOBER REVOLUTION—Bolshevik rule

* Bolsheviks had used MRC of Petrograd soviet, and had procrastinated till eve of national congress of soviets—intentionally or unintentionally, used soviets to legitimate Bolshevik seizure of power, common version of news was soviets took power
* Congress of soviets was not exclusive Bolshevik group (no majority, but dominant position), SRs and Mensheviks protested move, Mensheviks and SRs quit congress in protest
* Bolsheviks called for transfer of power to workers’ soldiers’ and peasants’ soviets throughout country
* It was presumed that standing central executive committee of soviets would become new gov, but Bolsheviks announced new Council of People’s commissars—all-bolshevik membership.
* In the provinces, local soviets took power—not always dominated by Bolsheviks
* Lenin was adamantly against coalition in new central government, even when several Bolsheviks resigned, later a few left SRs were admitted to the council, but they had no political base, dropped from gov in mid1918 when left SRs staged uprising against peace treaty
* Elections for constituent assembly in November 1917—bolsheviks came second place, SRs won most votes—because Bolsheviks took Petrograd and Moscow, won in urban Russia, and army of northern and western fronts and Baltic fleets, but on southern fronts and black sea fleet, lost out to SRs and Ukrainian parties
* SRs won because of peasant vote—peasants single issue voter, wanted land, but SR and Bolshevik programs same on land—SRs just better known
* Assembly proved hostile to Bolsheviks, so dispersed it, claimed they represented only working class, so democratic vote of whole nation didn’t matter

CIVIL WAR

* October seizure was beginning, not end of Bolshevik revolution
* Took Petrograd and after a week of street fighting Moscow too, but provincial centers didn’t follow Bolsheviks—dominated by Mensheviks and SRs
* Cadet newspapers issued call to arms for salvation of revolution, General Krasnov’s loyalist troops unsuccessfully engaged pro-B forces and red guards in battle outside Petrograd, heavy fighting in Moscow—preliminary round, Bolsheviks victors
* In large Russian armies on southern fronts, Bolsheviks were less popular than in northwest
* Germany remained at war with Russia, during peace negotiations Trotsky tried to use “no war, no peace” but this was impossible, Russian army at front was melting away while german army was not, germans called trotsky’s bluff and occupied large areas of Ukraine
* Lenin said peace had to be concluded, but had difficulty persuading party of need to sign peace with germany—left communists party group advocated revolutionary war of guerrilla resistance, left SRs took similar position, Lenin forced decision by threatening to resign
* Brest-Litovsk terms now even harsher, hugely punitive, lost all territory won in last 200 years
* Officers of old Russian army gathered forces in south, in Cossack territory of don and kuban, admiral Kolchak established anti-bolshevik gov in Siberia
* British had landed troops at two northern ports—murmansk and arkhangelsk—ostensibly to fight germans but also to support local opposition to new regime
* Non-russian troops passing through Russian territory—czech legion of 30,000 men, trying to reach Vladivostok, Bolsheviks sanctioned trip, but local soviets reacted with hostility, May 1918, Czechs clashed with Bolshevik dominated soviet in Urals town, other Czech units supported Russian SRs in samara where they rose up and tried to establish Volga republic, Czechs ended up fighting their way out of Russia
* Bolshevik “reds” vs antiBolshevik “whites” started in summer 1918, Moscow capital as Petrograd had escaped threat of capture by germans only to come under attack of white army
* Large areas not under Bolshevik control—siberia, southern Russia, Caucasus, Ukraine, urals and Volga—white armies threatened from east, north-west and south, Britain and france extremely hostile to regime and supported whites on small scale, USA and Japan sent troops to Siberia (Japan for territory, Americans to restrain japan, police trans-siberian railway, maybe support kolchak’s Siberian gov if it lived up to dem. Standards)
* White armies operated independently of each other, no central direction or coordination, their control over territorial bases even worse than Bolsheviks—regional governments had to be created almost from scratch, transport and communications systems historically highly centralized on Moscow and Petrograd—whites on the periphery, troop mobilization difficult, whites harassed by ‘green armies’ (neutral peasant and Cossack bands on periphery), problem of recruits and conscripts
* Red army under Trotsky, commissar for war, built up from beginning, nucleus consisted of red guards, pro-B units from old army and fleet, expanded by voluntary recruitment and selective conscription
* Workers and Communists first to be drafted, but by end of civil war, 5 million troops, mainly peasant conscripts—only 10% fighting troops, rest for supply, transport, administrative work, army had to fill in for civil administration
* Red army organized on regular army lines, subject to military discipline and appointed (not elected) officers, Trotsky and lenin insisted on using old tsarist officers, 50,000 used, mainly in senior military command, Tsarist officers paired with political commissars who had to countersign all orders to make sure they stayed loyal
* Soviet regime established security force: All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Struggle Against Counter-revolution, sabotage and speculation—CHEKA, originally to control banditry, looting and raiding, but soon became security police—anti-regime conspiracies and watch on potentially disloyal groups
* Cheka became organ of terror, executions, summary justice, mass arrests, hostages at random in areas of white control—at least 8400 killed without trial 1918-mid1919, 87000 arrested
* Comparable to white terror
* Red army and cheka useful in civil war but Bolsheviks also had support from urban working class, Bolshevik party as organizational nucleus—whites supported by old middle and upper classes, tsarist officer corps as main organizing agent; both reds and whites conscripted peasants, both requisitioned grain but reds had approved land seizures, so reds got more peasant support

WAR COMMUNISM

* War economy taken over in state of near collapse
* In the long term, Bs wanted to abolish private property and free market and distribute property according to need, so in short term, chose policies according to pragmatic need and ideological aims
* Nationalization and state distribution can be explained in terms of pragmatic response or ideological imperative of communism
* To cope with desperate situation, Bs turned to more radical policies, extended sphere of centralized gov control much further and faster than they intended
* Bs nationalized banking and credit quickly after oct rev, but didn’t embark on wholesale nationalization of industry—first decrees only on large individual concerns already closely involved with state through defense production and gov contracts
* Local soviets expropriated plants on their own authority, some plants abandoned by owners, some nationalized on petition of workers who had driven out management—in summer 1918, nationalization decree of all large industry, autumn 1919, 80% of large industry nationalized, nov 1920, nationalization of small industries (on paper)
* Almost complete prohibition on free trade and virtually moneyless economy by end of civil war
* Bs inherited state monopoly on grain and rationing in town but towns still short on food—peasants unwilling to sell when nothing to buy
* Bs tried to increase grain deliveries by offering manufactured goods in exchange
* Nationalized wholesale trade and prohibited free retail trade in basic foodstuffs and manufactured products, tried to convert consumer cooperatives into state distribution network
* Emergency measures to cope with food crisis in towns and army supply, but justified in ideological terms
* Money lost value, barter system taking over
* Rationing system favoured certain categories of population including red army, skilled workers, communist administrators and intelligentsia groups
* Factory organization to be under managers appointed by state following central planning and coordinating agencies, but during war some factories continued under workers’ committees, or trade unions or even experts and old owners
* Bolsheviks sent out workers and soldiers brigades to procure grain, tried to split village into opposing groups, expected to receive instinctive support from poor and landless peasants—committees of the poor established, encouraged them to extract grain from richer peasants—failed because of village solidarity and many landless peasants had gained land from land seizures
* Some sovkhozy (state farms) and kolkhozy (collective farms) set up—appointed managers supervising work of agri labourers who worked for wages, worked on land and marketed produce collectively—peasants regarded both with suspicion

ADMINISTRATION

* Authority at the center very confused—divided between the government (council of people’s commissars), soviets’ central executive committee and Bolshevik party’s central committee (with secretariat, orgburo and politburo)
* At first, central gov seemed in charge, but by end of civil war, bolsheviks’ central committee and politburo taking over, and at local level, party committees becoming dominant over the soviets
* Civil war caused siege mentality
* One way to consolidate victory was to eliminate old patterns of class exploitation—reverse them, in fact—‘class justice’—1918 constitution of Russian Republic gave all ‘toilers’ vote, but not to exploiting classes and enemies of soviet power—employers, persons living on unearned income or from rent, kulaks, priests, former gendarmes and other categories of tsarist official, officers in white armies
* By end of civil war, internal problems of administrative chaos and economic devastation—crop sowings dropped, two consecutive years of drought in Volga and other agri regions, coal production and railways breaking down, 1921-2 famines and epidemics, emigration of 2 million Russians had removed much of educated elite
* Demobilization in 1921 caused huge problems
* Industrial closures, military conscription, flight from towns—reduced number of industrial workers, returned to villages—support base of Bs evaporating
* European revolutions failed—so lenin concluded peasant support was needed
* But war communism had alienated peasants—peasant revolts in Ukraine and Rambov needed red troops to suppress them
* Outbreak of workers’ strikes in Petrograd, and kronstadt naval base sailors rebelled—repudiated Bolsheviks, regime turned its guns on proletariat revolutionaries
* New economic policy—improvised response to desperate economic circumstances, drive for complete nationalization abandoned and private sector reformed, but state retained control of largescale industry and banking, foreign investors invited to take out concessions for industrial and mining enterprises and development projects
* Finance commissariat pushed for stabilization of currency and limitations on gov and public spending, central gov budget cut, efforts made to increase revenue from taxation, schools and health care now had to be paid for
* Many communists felt disillusioned
* Strategic retreat of NEP meant party discipline needed more than ever—accompanied by arrest of 2000 mensheviks including all of Menshevik central committee, 1922 group of right SRs put on public trial
* 1922-23 100s of prominent cadets and Mensheviks forcibly deported from soviet republic
* Communist party only party, other parties outlawed
* Lenin encouraged campaigns to seize church property and break power of orthodox church during famine—counselled that a large number of local clergymen and bourgeois put on trial and executed
* Intraparty democratic centralism meant free debate before decision, after decision no debate
* By 1920, however, factions tended to remain in existence even after losing final vote—factions in trade union status debate became well-organized groups with policy platforms and lobbied for support in local party committees during discussions and election of delegates before 10th party congress—parliamentary politics developing
* Factions and debate took up too much time and energy when immediate problems needed to be dealt with, implicitly challenged lenin’s leadership, so lenin set out to destroy factions
* Lenin himself got together supporters and drew up lists of oppositionist to be voted down in central committee elections—defeated Trotsky’s faction and Workers’ Opposition faction at 10th congress—leninist majority on new central committee, Trotskyite members of secretariat replaced, ban on factionalism introduced—forbade existing factions and factional activity
* Resolution contained a secret clause allowing the party to expel persistent factionalists and central committee to remove any elected members judged guilty of factionalism
* But this clause not formally invoked in lenin’s lifetime
* 1921 autumn lenin initiated full scale purge of party—to retain party membership, every communist had to appear before commission, justify revolutionary credentials and defend against criticism
* Alleged purpose to weed out careerists, but also to get rid of oppositionists
* Secretariat in charge of appointments and distribution of party personnel sent a number of prominent Workers’ oppositionists on assignments far from Moscow, effectively excluding them from active participation
* Practice developed further by stalin when he became General Secretary 1922
* Party’s central apparat couldn’t compete with huge gov bureaucracy on day to day administrative level—too small, but at local levels, party committees emerged as dominant local authority, soviets fell into secondary role
* Policy transmitted through party chain of command better implemented than decrees of central government to uncooperative and chaotic soviets
* Gov had no hiring and firing powers over soviet personnel or budgetary control
* Party committees staffed by communists who had to obey instructions from higher party organs—party secretaries of local committees formally elected but could be removed and replaced by secretariat
* In 1924 economic revival erased some of working class difficulties, recovered and grew—party reaffirmed proletarian identity by announcing lenin levy—workers encouraged to move into admin jobs
* By 1927, communist party had over a million full members and candidates, 56% working class

POWER STRUGGLE

* 1924, Lenin replaced by Rykov as Chairman of Council of People’s Commissars
* But it was clear that main locus of power in party’s politburo, not central gov^
* Seven full members (including lenin): Trotsky (war commissar), stalin (general secretary), Zinoviev (head of Leningrad party organization and comintern), Kamenev (head of Moscow party organization), rykov and tomsky (head of central council of trade unions)
* Trotsky odd man out because of late entry and spectacular performance
* Covert succession struggle in progress 1923—triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin vs Trotsky
* “New Course” 1923, Trotsky writes old Bolsheviks succumbing to conservative bureaucratic factionalism, behaving more like small ruling elite
* Lenin testament of 1922, added postscript on stalin’s rudeness, read out after his death
* Lenin recognized stalin as a potential contender—stalin had been right hand man during 1920-1 establishment of ban on factionalism
* Triumvirate battle came to head winter 1923-4, situation comparable to 1920-1, stalin followed much the same strategy as lenin
* In party discussions and election of delegates before 13th party congress, trotsky’s supporters campaigned an opposition, while party apparat was mobilized in support of central committee majority (triumvirate), triumvir won
* Trotsky still had pockets of support in central gov bureaucracy, unis, red army
* Intensive assault on pro-trotsky cells induced many of them to defect to majority
* Delegates elected in spring 1924 for forthcoming party congress, trotsky’s support evaporated
* General secretary was in a position to manipulate the ‘circular flow of power’ secretariat appointed secretaries who headed local party organizations and could also dismiss them if they showed undesirable factional leanings.
* Local party organizations elected delegates to national party conferences and congresses and was increasingly common for secretaries to be routinely elected at top of local delegate list
* National party congresses elected members of party’s central committee, orgburo, politburo and secretariat
* Gen-Sec could not only punish political opponents but also stack the congresses
* 1925 stalin broke with Zinoviev and Kamenev, forcing them into defensive opposition where they looked like the aggressors
* Zinoviev and Kamenev join Trotsky in united opposition, defeated as supporters appointed to jobs in distant provinces, so few oppositionist delegates at congresses that leaders seemed irresponsible and lost touch with mood of party
* 1927 opposition leaders and many supporters finally expelled from party for breaking factionalism ban, administrative exile in distant provinces
* Stalin and Trotsky didn’t actually differ much on ideology, but stalin’s public stance was more moderate
* Rank and file party members perceived personal characteristics more clearly—trotsky was jewish intellectual, ruthless and flamboyant, charismatic and showy; stalin was neutral, shadowy, not charismatic or intellectual, not jewish
* Socialism in one country: they could create preconditions of socialism by own unaided efforts, national modernization not international revolution, Bolsheviks didn’t need revolutions in Europe as a prop, no need for foreign goodwill
* Ideological issues with this theory—disturbingly chauvinistic, pandering to the crowds
* Trotsky pointed out Bolsheviks always internationalist, stalin’s supporters portrayed him as a cosmopolitan who cared less about Russia than Europe
* Trotsky said he was no less industrializer than stalin, stalin’s men recalled he had advocated labor conscription in 1920 and thus was prepared to sacrifice interests of working class
* Trotsky argued foreign trade and credits essential for industrialization—only further proof of internationalism, not to mention lack of realism, since it appeared increasingly unlikely that foreign trade and credits would be obtainable—stalin took patriotic and practical stand, no need or desire to beg favors from west
* But soviets knew capital accumulation was prerequisite—must draw on its own resources, of the population, in effect soviet industrialization meant squeezing peasantry
* Bukharin argued it was likely to alienate peasants and regime couldn’t afford to break worker-peasant alliance that Lenin described as political basis of NEP
* Stalin didn’t participate in debate, many assumed he shared position of his then ally Bukharin
* But stalin took a tougher line on kulak threat, 1925 explicitly dissociated himself from bukharin’s cheerful ‘get rich’